# U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
## Northwestern Division
## Regional Business Center

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE CONCEPT

**15 July 2004**

# Standard Operating Procedures
## For the Implementation of the
## Community of Practice Concept

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1** **Purpose**. This document establishes the context and procedures for the implementation of the community of practice concept within the Northwestern Division Regional Business Center, in accordance with the concepts set forth in USACE 2012.

**1.2** **Scope**. There have been 24 USACE communities of practice established by Headquarters. Each member of the Corps belongs to at least one of the USACE communities of practice. These communities are open to all members of the Corps. And, they are open to external members that participate or share an interest in the functions of the Corps. The Communities of Practice are established so that their members improve upon and share knowledge, insights, and experiences with others who have similar interests or goals and to learn from one another. While the members work in teams for projects, participation in the longer-lived communities of practice is required for developing and maintaining expertise.

**1.3** **Expected Outcome**. The critical outcome of the communities of practice is the development and maintenance of expertise through knowledge sharing and other learning initiatives. The communities of practice will provide for and lead professional development, maintenance of technical and professional capabilities, quality control/assurance, recommendations for research and development, use of new technologies, greater interface with public and private sectors, and development and update of regulations and policies.

**1.4** **Program Proponent**. The Business Technical Division, Regional Business Directorate, is the proponent for the implementation of the community of practice concept within the Northwestern Division Regional Business Center. Within this organization, the primary point-of-contact for these efforts is Dr. Surya Bhamidipaty

## 2. THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE CONCEPT

**2.1** **Headquarters Policy**. Headquarters is in the process of developing policy for the implementation of the community of practice concept. The pre-decisional concept draft of this policy is currently available at the NWD Intranet CoP site (https://w3.nwd.usace.army.mil/mt/copbasic.asp ) and the EKO site (https://eko.usace.army.mil/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=4601 &destination=ShowItem) and when finalized, the HQ policy will be included in Appendix B of this document.. When finalized, the HQ policy will be applicable

to all USACE communities of practice.  This draft policy discusses the following aspects of community of practice guidance: intent, operating principles, purpose and functions, type, roles and responsibilities, processes, resourcing, metrics, lexicon, and toolkit.   The draft HQ policy indicates that the intent of the communities of practice is to:

- Enhance professional and technical development
- Share and create knowledge
- Promote communication
- Reduce errors – through standardized and shared knowledge

This same draft Headquarters policy defines the purposes and functions of the HQUSACE communities of practice as:

- To Develop and maintain Policy and Doctrine
- To Promote Capable Workforce
- To Build and Maintain National Relationships and Coalitions
- To Promote Organizational Communication
- To Enhance Learning Organization

This HQ policy is being used to develop the USACE communities but some of the descriptions contained therein are "fuzzy" and without common definitions that are completely or consistently understood.  For our purposes the mission of the communities of practice is:
To develop and maintain expertise, and to network with others to share knowledge.

The Headquarters is also specifically responsible for the development of the tools and knowledge management systems that are to be used across all 24 communities that have been established by the Headquarters.  Regional implementation of the community of practice concept is not to establish separate communities of practice but rather promote and participate in the overall USACE communities.  The regional business center will not be developing any separate knowledge management systems.  The Technical Excellence Network (TEN) is a key community of practice enabler identified in the USACE 2012-Aligning USACE for Success in the 21$^{st}$ Century.
URL: http://ten.usace.army.mil/techexnet.aspx
The Engineering Knowledge On-Line (EKO) is also being used as CoP portal for several of the USACE CoPs.  Army Knowledge On-Line (AKO) user name and password are required for log-in to the EKO CoP site:
URL:  https://eko.usace.army.mil/usacecop/index.cfm?

**2.2** **Roles of the Communities**. A list of generic roles for communities of practice is shown in the table below. It is representative of the Northwestern Division chapters of the communities of practice.

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### What are the Community of Practice Roles?

o To create a community identity
o To provide formal and informal consultation
o To stimulate interaction between members
o To identify and recognize experts
o To enhance comradeship
o To serve as a resource pool
o To create and share new knowledge
o To develop and provide policies and guidance
o To foster learning
o To accelerate communication
o To assess regional capability of members
o To support the development and delivery of training opportunities
o To support development of recognition programs
o To provide assistance to individual knowledge and skills development
o To promote innovation
o To identify and share best practices
o To develop process performance enhancements
o To address common issues of the community of practice
o To connect the community's agenda to the Corps' business strategies
o To network with private industry

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**2.3** **Characteristics**. To further assist in the definition of a community of practice, the following are presented as defining characteristics of a community of practice.

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o <u>Joint Enterprise</u> – The members are here to accomplish something on an ongoing basis. They have some kind of work in common and see clearly the larger purpose of that work.

o <u>Mutual Engagement</u> – The members interact with one another not just in the course of doing work, but also to clarify that work and define how it is done and even how to change how it is done.

o <u>Shared Experience</u> – The members have not just work in common but also methods, tools, techniques and even language, stories and behavior patterns.

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**2.4    Responsibilities**.  Liberally borrowing from work by the Mississippi Valley, South Pacific, and Pacific Ocean Divisions, the communities of practice will be responsible for the following activities:

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**Community of Practice Responsibilities**

1.  Support professional development of the work force by providing opportunities for training, mentoring, and, coaching, capturing and communicating lessons learned, and fostering an atmosphere for continuous self-improvement and education.

2.  Support the development and delivery of training courses and other educational activities.

3.  Support the development and delivery of formal coaching and mentoring programs.

4.  Foster and promote meetings, conferences, and other media for the exchange and learning of new applied technologies, procedures and analytical tools to maintain the highest level of technical proficiency.

5.  Support the evaluation of regional work force capability and recommend actions to maintain and improve these capabilities.

6.  Promote active involvement and participation of the work force in professional societies and organizations and the writing and publication of technical and professional papers and reports.

7.  Develop, implement, and manage quality control and quality assurance programs and through assessments and evaluations develop procedures and standards and makes other recommendations for improvements.

8.  Develop policies and guidance for process improvements.

9.  Develop recommendations for Research and Development needed to create new knowledge.

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## 3. ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

**3.1 National Communities**. As indicated above, Headquarters has established 24 communities of practice, which represent major functions and programs within the Corps. Each USACE community of practice is a single national community and the Chief of Engineers will charter each community. The communities are comprised of members throughout the Headquarters, division, and district offices. Leaders of the USACE CoPs are from the Headquarters; however, we have regional community program managers, chapter managers and other leaders at division, and district levels. The USACE community will be responsible for the deployment of automated information management systems and tools, and the content management of knowledge systems. The divisions (regional business centers) will be responsible for regional chapters of the national communities to support the regional needs. The USACE communities and the Headquarters community leaders are identified in the following table.

| USACE Communities of Practice and Headquarters Leaders | | |
|---|---|---|
| USACE Community of Practice | Headquarters Leader | Organization |
| Planning & Policy | Bill Dawson | MVD RIT |
| Project Management/Program Management | Rob Vining | CW PID |
| Engineering & Construction | Don Basham | SAD RIT |
| Operations & Regulatory | Mike White | LRD RIT |
| Environmental | Pat Rivers | SWD RIT |
| Installation Support | Kris Allaman | CID |
| Interagency & International Support (I&IS) | Tony Leketa | GRD |
| Real Estate (RE) | Linda Garvin | SPD RIT |
| Research & Development | Mike O'Connor | NWD RIT |
| Counsel | TBD | Chief Counsel |
| Contracting | B. Greenhouse | PARC |
| Human Resources | S. Duncan | HR |
| Corporate Information | Wil Berrios | NAD RIT |
| Resource Management | Steve Coakley | RM |
| Safety | R. Stout | SAFETY |
| Logistics | Gary Anderson | LG |
| PAO | Carol Sanders | PAO |
| SADBU | J. Blake | SADBU |
| Strategic Planning | B. Elliot | CID |
| Security & Law Enforcement | Ken Flemming | S&LE |
| EEO | G. Williams | EEO |
| EIG | LTC. James | IG |
| Internal Review | TBD | IR |
| Emergency Operations | Ed Hecker | NWD RIT |

The scheduled set-up for the Project Management/Program Management, Engineering and Construction, Operations and Regulatory, Counsel, Installation Support, SADBU, Real Estate, and Logistics communities of practice will occur in the April to July 2004 timeframe. The Environmental, Planning and Policy, Corporate Information, Resource Management, Public Affairs, Safety, Strategic

Planning, and Emergency Operations communities are scheduled to stand up in the July to September 2004 time frame.  And, the Contracting, Human Resources, Research & Development, Security and Law Enforcement, EEO, EIG, Internal Review, and I&IS communities are scheduled to stand up in the September to November 2004 timeframe.

**3.2**     **Regional Chapters of Communities of Practice**.  While the Headquarters is responsible for the development of the knowledge management systems, regional chapters of the communities will emphasize relationship building, regional training, and promotion of the community to meet regional needs.  After all, the emphasis of a community of practice is 90% on relationships and only 10% on the tools.  The Program Managers for managing the implementation of the community of practice concept in the Northwestern Division are identified in the following table.

| Northwestern Division Community Program Managers | | |
|---|---|---|
| USACE Community of Practice | Northwestern Division Manager | Organization |
| Planning & Policy | Dennis Wagner | DST |
| Project Management/Program Management | Dave Brown (CW) | CWID |
| | John Popelka (MP) | MID |
| Engineering & Construction | Surya Bhamidipaty | BTD |
| Operations & Regulatory | Pete Gibson | PSD |
| Environmental | Dan Tosoni | MID |
| Installation Support | Erik Blechinger | MID |
| Interagency & International Support (I&IS) | Dan Tosoni | MID |
| Real Estate (RE) | John Minger | PSD |
| Research & Development | Phil Wagner | BTD |
| Counsel | John Eft | NSF-OC |
| Contracting | Joe Scanlan | BMD |
| Human Resources | Debi Wagner | NSF-HR |
| Corporate Information | Brian Hood | BMD |
| Resource Management | Tom Elsemore | BRD |
| Safety | Bruce Barrett | NSF-SO (POD) |
| Logistics | Karen McKenna | BMD |
| PAO | Homer Perkins | BMD |
| SADBU | Carol McIntyre | NSF-SADBU |
| Strategic Planning | Kevin Brice | BMD |
| Security & Law Enforcement | Vacant | S&LE |
| EEO | Vacant | |
| Internal Review | Vacant | NSF-IR |
| Emergency Operations | Mike Beaird | EM |

**3.3**     **Scope of Regional Chapters**.  Depending on community needs, the regional chapters of the USACE communities may be extremely simple or they may be rather sophisticated.  There is a continuum of potential levels of activity.  If there are few members or little interest in the region, then the members may participate in the USACE community and there would be no need for a regional chapter.  At the other end of the continuum would be a sophisticated chapter that could

include many different training venues, newsletters, websites, workshops, conferences, teleconferences, etc.  Most of the regional chapters would probably fall in the middle of the continuum, all with the aim of supplementing the USACE communities.  At a minimum, the regional support to a community should ensure notification of the membership about USACE community activities.  To this, regional or local discussion groups might be added.  Then notes of the discussions might be published.  Other activities might be added as determined by the membership of the chapter of the community or sub-community.

3.4     **Membership**.  Each member of the Corps belongs to at least one of the USACE communities of practice.  These communities are open to all members of the Corps.  And, they are open to external members that participate or share an interest in the functions of the Corps.  Within the community, members have several types of roles and levels of involvement.  Significant responsibilities to the communities will be reflected in position descriptions and performance plans.  Participation in community activities will also be reflected in performance plans and individual development plans (IDPs).  All organizational mission and function statements will include support to the communities of practice.  While the extent of these activities will depend on the scope of the community, there are several types of members that have distinct responsibilities:

- NWD CoP Program Management Team.   The NWD Community of Practice Program Management Team consists of the community program managers listed in paragraph 3.2 above, and the following members from each of the districts:
  - o  NWK: Bill Zaner
  - o  NWO: Bob Roumph
  - o  NWP: Brent Mahan
  - o  NWS: Lori Danielson
  - o  NWW: Mike Bart

  The NWD CoP Program Management Team is responsible for managing the implementation of the community of practice concept within the Northwestern Division Regional Business Center.

- Community Chapter Managers.  In addition to the community program managers that are listed above, other members of the Northwestern Division staff and functional managers and team leaders in the districts have specific community of practice management responsibilities associated with their positions.  They include Division, Branch, Section Chiefs and Team Leaders at the districts.  Community managers are established through their position in the organization, and their duties supporting the community's activities are reflected in each individual's position description and performance plan.  The community managers also garner management support for the community, legitimize community participation, direct the community to issues of long-term importance to the business, and protect the community while it is developing and evolving.

- Other Community Leaders. While many if not most of the community managers may also be leaders, there are also informal and organizational leaders that are recognized by their peers, based on both their expertise, ability to lead, interest, and enthusiasm.

- General Membership. Members are individuals that practice and share an interest in the functions or programs of the Corps. Members include anyone who has been involved with the functions or programs in the past, is currently involved with the function or program, or anyone who has a desire to be involved with the function or program in the future. All past, current, or future participants are encouraged to participate within the communities. Participants may also include our customers, sponsors, stakeholders, other regional federal, state, local, NGO, industry groups, private industry, and academia. Corps members will include participation in formal or planned community activities within their performance plans and individual development plans. The sharing of information, lessons learned, and new technologies and providing consultation services or assistance may or may not be funded, but funding should not be the guiding factor in promoting active participation in the CoP.

- Specialized Support to USACE Communities. Headquarters is responsible for the development and delivery of a knowledge management system for the USACE communities. The pre-decisional draft Headquarters policy establishes positions and definitions of "Subject Matter Experts" and "Catalysts," which are integral to this proposed knowledge management system. And, as indicated in Paragraph 9.2, no funding source has been identified to support these knowledge management positions.

    -Subject Matter Experts serve on policy development cells when formed. They provide legitimacy and check information for accuracy and relevance. And, they help define the learning agenda, provide content, and answer questions. Subject Matter Experts would generally reside in the districts.

    -Catalysts are members who manage, facilitate, vet issues, and act as gatekeepers. Catalysts (also referred to as Content Editors in the implementation of a knowledge management system), in coordination with the Subject Matter Experts conduct the daily administration of the knowledge management system. Limited Division staff members have some catalyst-type duties, but the positions presently do not include knowledge management responsibilities.

3.5 **Sub-Communities of Practice**. The key to the development of the sub-communities will be finding people who already network and help them to imagine how increased networking and knowledge sharing could be valuable. As members build connections, then they can coalesce into a community. The development of these sub-communities will start with a very simple structure of

regularly scheduled teleconferences and informal meetings piggy-backed upon other scheduled community activities.  Once people are engaged and begin to build relationships, the core members can then begin introducing other elements of community structure – such as information on a Web site, links to other communities, projects to define key practices – one at a time.

## 4.  COMMUNITY CHAPTER DESIGN AND INITIATION

**4.1**   **Scope of Regional Chapters**.  The first task of the regional chapter manager will be to determine the scope of the chapter's efforts – where on the continuum that is discussed in Paragraph 3.3 will the chapter's activities be located.  This will be the underlying basis for the chapters' program management plans, which will serve as a roadmap for the chapter.  Activities that are probably required to determine this scope include:

- Coordination with the Headquarters community of practice leader.
- Identification of the membership within the region.
- Validation of level of expertise of members.
- Identification of leaders and managers.
- Definition of the current state of the community – often accomplished through surveys.
- Performance of a needs assessment for the community – often accomplished through surveys or interviews or workshops.
- Development of detailed activities to address the needs that will respond to the overall goal of developing and maintaining expertise.  These activities will concentrate on the following:

  o Relationships
  o Regional training/mentoring/coaching/etc.
  o Promoting the Community of Practice

**4.2**   **Guidance for Design and Initiation**.   There are a number of sources that can assist in the design and initiation of a regional chapter of a community of practice.
- A separate folder (CoP) of documents related to communities of practice is on the NWD Intranet CoP Site.  Many CoPs and Sub-CoPs have already developed Program Management Plans and templates.  Each community of practice and sub community will add their draft or final program management plans and related documents to the Site.  Plagiarism is a true form of flattery – borrow all that you can.

- The pre-decisional concept draft of the Headquarters guidance, <u>USACE Community of Practice (CoP) Policy</u>, addresses national implementation of the USACE communities.  The focus of the guidance is on the development and management of the knowledge management system – the primary tool of the communities of practice.  The policy does, however, address the intent and functions of the communities as indicated above in Paragraph 2.1.

- The draft Headquarters policy relies heavily on the <u>Community of Practice Implementation Guide by the Defense Acquisition University</u>. This document is a guide for the implementation of a knowledge management system, rather than all aspects of a community of practice. In this guide, the terms for a community of practice (CoP) and their knowledge management system are interchangeable. Appendix C of the draft Headquarters policy is taken directly from this document, except that the term "content editor" has been replaced by "catalyst".

- The book: <u>Cultivating Communities of Practice</u> by Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William M. Snyder presents a useful number of design principles. These include: 1) Design for Evolution, 2) Open a dialog between inside and outside perspectives, 3) Invite different levels of participation, 4) Develop both public and private community spaces, 5) Focus on Value, 6) Combine familiarity and excitement, and 7) Create a rhythm for the community.

- The Business Technical Division, Regional Management Directorate, is the proponent for the implementation of the community of practice concept within the Northwestern Division Regional Business Center. As a part of this responsibility, members of the BTD are available to assist in the development of the chapters of the communities of practice. In addition to maintaining materials on the NWD Website, monthly forums for the development and implementation of Northwestern Division chapters of the communities of practice will be scheduled to include sessions during SAVs at districts.

## 5. COMMUNICATIONS

**5.1** **Communication Plan**. Communication is the basic activity of a community of practice and it will involve all of its members. Initially, efforts will be focused on establishing internal communication. Once this is established, efforts will be broadened to include a broader external membership. People share lessons learned from people they know and trust. Therefore, the community needs to encourage networking by members to know more people and to develop trust through community activities, increase the ability to share lessons learned with those that they do know, and increase the ability to share information with people that they don't know. The intent of this CoP guidance is to provide a starting point for communities to develop and evolve, not to set a rigid structure. We want to encourage spontaneity that will bring groups of people together to share common problems and to share their solutions or work together to develop new or better ones.

**5.2** **Promulgation of Policies and Guidance**. As indicated above, communities of practice are responsible for the development of policies and guidance, but they are not included within the command channels of the hierarchal organization – and

therefore cannot direct action through command channels.  A community chapter may identify needs for policy and guidance, or the chapter may be commissioned by the hierarchal organization.  Once the policy and guidance is developed, it may be accepted throughout the community, but formal promulgation within command channels can only be accomplished through the hierarchal organization.  Most of the communities have identifiable equivalent functional organizations in the Northwestern Division that would promulgate the guidance.  But, with the organizational restructuring associated with USACE 2012, there is no longer functional organizations equivalent to the Planning & Policy, Engineering & Construction, Operations, or Real Estate communities of practice.  Guidance developed by the Northwestern Division chapters of these communities will be prepared by the Regional Community Manager for staffing through the Division hierarchal structure and promulgated through the Division Commander.

## 6.  COMMUNITY METRICS

**6.1**    **Need for Metrics**.  Measurement is costly and the worth needs to be carefully considered with respect to what the organization needs to learn and where to focus scarce time and resources to collect and analyze the information.  We do, however, need to determine how effective the community is in reaching and providing value to the members and help take positive action to build and improve the community.

**6.2**    **Activity Metrics (Quantitative)**.  Quantitative measures may be used to establish existing demographics for the community and provide a basis for tracking changes.  Some community outputs such as training opportunities provided or workshop attendance can be tracked but these activity metrics are poor when it comes to measuring contributions of the community.

**6.3**    **Performance Metrics (Qualitative)**.  Traditional methods of measurement do not appreciate the creativity, sharing, and self-initiative that are the core elements of how a community creates value.  Performance metrics must try to indicate the value of the community's services to its members – which are qualitative in nature.  These would include the telling of stories, ratings, testimonials, and other user feedback.

## 7.  BUDGETING

The largest unresolved issue regarding communities of practice is funding and there is no separable funding for the communities in FY 2004.  In spite of the lack of dedicated funds, there is general agreement on the budgeting process for community activities within the NWD Headquarters. Travel and per diem for the participation of members that reside in the NWD Headquarters would be included in the normal budgeting process for their organizations. It is therefore key that community events be included in a community's program management plan so that the activities can be budgeted by its members well in advance. Those

organizations that are the home of Northwestern Division community managers would include separate line-item requests for funding to support items such as district support (often referred to as a checkbook), workshop facilities, etc. The budgets would be subject to the review of the PBAC for reasonableness and prioritization.

## 8.  PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PLANS

The activities to be accomplished through a chapter of a community of practice need to be described in a Program Management Plan. Program management plans for the regional chapters of the communities of practice must be completed no later than 60 days after the USACE community's program management plan has been completed.  The plan must include:

- Needs Assessment Results.  After the membership has been identified and the current state of the community has been determined, a needs assessment must be conducted.  The results of this assessment should be documented in the program management plan.

- Ongoing Community Activities.  Successful community of practice activities that have been previously conducted through the "stovepipes" cannot be lost.  The continuation of these activities will form a foundation upon which the communities can be continued.

- Scope of the Chapter.  Between the needs assessment, ongoing activities and coordination with the Headquarters community leader, the scope of the regional chapter of the community must be determined.  Paragraph 3.3 above describes a continuum of levels of engagement for chapters of communities of practice.  The program management plan must describe where on the continuum that the chapter will function. This will be the underlying basis for the chapter's program management plan.

- Scheduled events and activities.  Once the scope is determined, events and activities to meet the identified needs can be scheduled.  This scheduling is particularly important so that participants can budget their participation in future events.

- Identification of core participants.  Within the Northwestern Division Headquarters, this will result after the negotiation of activities into the position descriptions and performance plans of Division staff. Commitments from district participants are also required.

- Communications Plan. The mechanisms for communicating between community members must be identified.

- A budget.  For FY 2004, there is no current separable funding available for community of practice activities.  While not necessary in the initial program management plan, capability estimates for proposed activities in follow-on years would allow the community to seek funding, should it become available.

- Community Metrics.  The plan should include preliminary measures for assessing community success, which would be further developed and refined as the community becomes operational.

## 9.  OUTSTANDING ISSUES

9.1     **Funding**.  Funding for community of practice activities is the most significant issue.  Participation of district members of the community is critical to the success but district members are generally project funded.  While a district can fund some activities through their overhead accounts, there is increasing pressure to reduce the overhead rates.  The promise of substantial funding to support the communities of practice remains only a promise and no potential separate source of funding has been identified and if identified will likely be nominal.

9.2     **Knowledge Management System Support**. One industry model for a community of practice, presented at the national Project Delivery Team Conference, is where a knowledge manager routes questions and requests to subject matter experts and all knowledge gets routed through a reviewer by the knowledge manager before posting.  The pre-decisional concept draft Headquarters guidance for the development of communities of practice includes the requirements of identified Subject Matter Experts and "Catalysts" that will have significant duties for knowledge management.  As noted, dedicated individuals to accomplish these activities have not been identified and funding has not been established for these activities. At present, there appears to be many different expectations of the knowledge management system.  Some see a very structured approach as discussed above where knowledge is aggressively managed.  Others see a very loose system of completely voluntary participation, very few, if any, gatekeepers, and the responsibility for content placed on each individual who accesses the system.  At present, the system is being oversold as a panacea to replace the expertise lost in the division and Headquarters offices, without the commitment of resources required to meet the high expectations that are being generated.

9.3     **Automated Information Systems**.  Deployment of the knowledge management tools is a responsibility of the national USACE communities of practice.  These tools will be most useful only if they are developed at the national level so that there can be sharing across all of the divisions and districts – allowing knowledge sharing throughout the USACE communities of practice.  The Headquarters is presently investigation alternative automated information systems to support knowledge management.  Presently TEN and EKO are the accepted systems for

several communities of practice.  Since "knowledge management is 90% about connecting people and not about the tools", the concentration of effort for the implementation of regional chapters of the communities will be on developing relationships, training and promoting the community.  Delays in the deployment of the automated information systems should not adversely impact the implementation of these more important community functions.

**9.4**     **Positive Incentives for Meaningful Change**.  Prior to the implementation of USACE 2012, functional teams were included in the Northwestern Division's hierarchal organization structure as "stovepipes".  With the implementation of USACE 2012, the teams for the core functions now reside separate from the hierarchal organization as communities of practice.  The positive attribute that is embodied in the community of practice concept is that knowledge is shared across traditional geographic boundaries.  The "stovepipes" created within our hierarchy tended to limit this sharing.  By taking the core functional teams out of the hierarchical organization, we have eliminated management control in favor of increased creativity and the elimination of organizational boundaries to the sharing of information.

## APPENDIX A
## USACE 2012 Implementation Off-Site Discussions:

## Transition from "Stovepipes" to Communities of Practice
## 19 February 2004

The overall discussion of the communities of practice started with a discussion of the change from the "stovepipe" culture to a community of practice culture. To put the change in perspective a listing of potential problems with the "stovepipes" follows:

### Problems with "Stovepipes"

| | |
|---|---|
| In-bred | Turf |
| No sharing | Narrow perspective |
| Insular | Self-serving |
| No lessons learned | Not conducive to team building |
| Arrogant | Not communicative |

Compare this to a list of negative behaviors of communities of practice, taken from the book: Cultivating Communities of Practice by Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William M. Snyder.

### Problems with Communities of Practice

| | |
|---|---|
| Excessive Zealousness | Emphasizing Differences |
| Arrogance | Cliques |
| Exclusive Ownership | Imperious |
| Hoarding Knowledge | Defensive |
| Hostage Situation | Egalitarianism (group norm) |
| Self-righteousness | Dependence |
| Imperialism | Stratification |
| Knowledge Police | Disconnectedness |
| Narcissism (one-upmanship) | Localism |
| Marginality | Documentism (documenting as an end) |
| Factionalism | Amnesia (lack of documentation) |
| Outlets for Dissatisfaction | Dogmatic |
| Gripe Communities | Mediocrity |
| Drain on the energy | Stickiness (jargon to exclude) |
| "Religious" wars | Leakiness |

If a brainstorming exercise were conducted the list of problems with "stovepipes" would likely grow longer and the two lists above would have probably be even more similar. The "stovepipes" accomplished community of practice functions and were a part of the hierarchical organization. Adverse behaviors associated with communities of practice are no different than the adverse behaviors of "stovepipes" and a normal management reaction to control these adverse behaviors is to place the communities within hierarchal

organizations – which is where we started prior to the implementation of USACE 2012. The elimination of these problems is not addressed by the structural changes that we are making but rather dependent upon modifications of behavior. This is an important point that we cannot forget if we are really going to make any meaningful change.

The positive attribute that is embodied in the community of practice concept is that knowledge is shared across traditional geographic boundaries. The "stovepipes" created within our geographical hierarchy tended to limit this sharing. The "stovepipes" were, however, conducting critical community of practice activities to develop and maintain expertise. And, it is important that these activities not get lost in the transition to the new organizational concepts. As stated at the last national PDT conference, the risk of USACE 2012 is to our technical capability. And, we cannot let the focus on maintaining our expertise get lost in the reorganization. The "stovepipes" and now the communities of practice were and are responsible for the development and maintenance of expertise. By taking the communities of practice out of the hierarchical organization, we have eliminated management control in favor of increased creativity and the elimination of organizational boundaries to the sharing of information. In doing so, we must now concentrate on providing positive incentives to support positive behaviors.